



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Personnel Security Bulletin #04-01 Subject: Completion Times for Background Investigations

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Subject:

Completion Times for Background Investigations

Office of the
Assistant
Secretary
For Administration

Issue:

Final Completion of Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Background Investigations (BI) is Significantly Delayed by National Agency Checks (NAC's).

Office of
Procurement and
Property
Management

Date Issued:

October 14, 2003

Effective Date:

N/A

Personnel and
Document Security
Division
Mail Stop 9305

Scope and Effect:

This is an internal advisory document for use by USDA personnel involved in implementing USDA's personnel security program

1400
Independence
Avenue SW

Supersession:

This Bulletin supersedes Bulletin #03-02.

Washington, DC
20250-9305

Background:

The events of September 11, 2001, subsequent activation of military units, and startup of the Department of Homeland Security negatively impacted OPM's ability to meet its traditional 35-75-120 day BI timeframes.

The OPM data below shows the average number of calendar days it takes OPM to complete the personal coverage portion of USDA BI's:

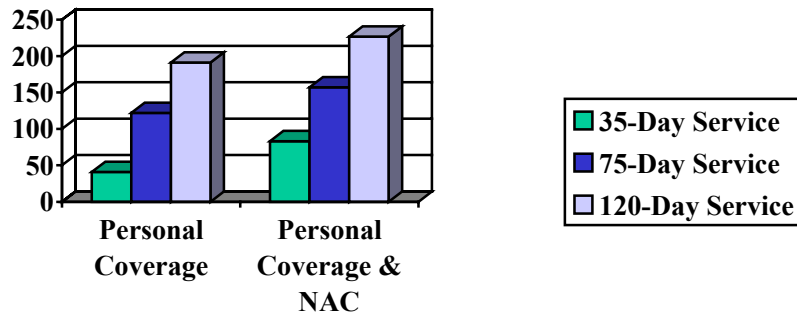
<u>Requested Investigation</u> (Calendar Days)	<u>Actual Average Time</u> (Calendar Days)
35 days	41 days
75 days	122 days
120 days	191 days

Note, however, that before investigations are closed and final clearances issued, all NAC's must be completed. Two of the NAC's—the FBI Investigative Files and Military Personnel Records Center checks—are taking several months to complete. When completion of the personal coverage portion and NAC's are considered, the average OPM completion times are:

<u>Requested Investigation</u> (Calendar Days)	<u>Actual Average Time</u> (Calendar Days)
35 days	83 days
75 days	157 days
120 days	227 day

Unfortunately, the completion of FBI Investigative Files record checks is outside OPM's control. See chart below.

OPM Calendar Days Completion Times for Personal Coverage and NAC's



PDSD Actions: The Personnel and Document Security Division (PDSD) regularly reviews 35-day cases and notifies OPM of significant delays. In addition, PDSD urges OPM to quickly complete certain past due cases. Finally, upon request of the appropriate program manager, PDSD grants temporary clearances in exceptional cases.

Actions Mission Areas Can Take: Mission Areas and Staff Offices can assist in reducing processing time by ensuring that personnel security forms are complete and accurate when submitted to PDSD. This will reduce the time PDSD spends on reviewing forms and returning them to Mission Areas for correction. PDSD's performance goal is to move paperwork from USDA to OPM within two weeks of receipt from the Mission Areas. Properly completed paperwork can be forwarded to OPM so investigations can be scheduled without delay.

Mission Areas and Staff Offices should also consider the delays when selecting the level of service they are requesting for investigations, and consider ordering expedited 35 day or 75 days service where appropriate. Finally, personnel security points of contact should notify PDSD of overdue cases having a special need for clearance.

Further Information: Please contact PDSD at 202 720-PDSD (7373).

Susan L. Gulbranson, Chief
Personnel Security Branch
Personnel and Document Security Division
Office of Procurement and Property Management